

Message Text

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TAGS: CASC, PFOR, UR, US (RUCHKIN, VIKTOR)(SIEVERS, ROBERT)

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORT OF RUCHKIN CASE

REF: MOSCOW 1365

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED PAGE C7 WASHINGTON POST
JANUARY 28 UNDER HEADLINE "RUSSIAN GIVEN PROBATION IN
VA. CASE":
2. "A RUSSIAN AEROFLOT AIRLINES EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH
DRUNK DRIVING IN FALLS CHURCH LAST NOVEMBER WAS PLACED ON
PROBATION YESTERDAY TO HELP PRESERVE DETENTE, ACCORDING TO
THE JUDGE IN THE CASE.
3. "WE JUST HAVE A LOT OF PROBLEMS WITH (THE CASE)",
FAIRFAX COUNTY GENERAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE ROBERT M.
HURST SAID IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW. "THAT JUST SEEMED
LIKE THE THING TO DO, YOU KNOW, WITH DETENTE AND ALL THAT".

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 020353

4. "THE STATE DEPARTMENT CHARGED THAT NINE DAYS AFTER THE
ARREST OF VIKTOR A. RUCHKIN OF ALEXANDRIA ON NOV. 10, AN
AMERICAN WHO IS A PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS EMPLOYEE
WORKING IN MOSCOW WAS ARRESTED ON SIMILAR CHARGES IN
RETALIATION.
5. "CHARGES AGAINST THE AMERICAN, ROBERT S. SIEVERS,

"HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF" ACCORDING TO A SOVIET MESSAGE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID. BUT YESTERDAY, SIEVERS AND HIS FAMILY WERE TEMPORARILY NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE RUSSIA AND IT WAS UNCLEAR HOW THE CHARGE WAS DISPOSED OF, THE SPOKESMAN SAID. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS NOW "TAKING UP (THE TRAVEL RESTRICTION) WITH SOVIET AUTHORITIES," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

6. "ACCORDING TO STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN, SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS WANTED CHARGES AGAINST RUCHKIN DROPPED. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID THE ARREST WAS A LOCAL MATTER AND THAT RUCHKIN DID NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FROM ARREST.

7. "RATHER THAN GET INTO ANY COMPLICATION WITH THE FELLOW (AMERICAN) OVER THERE," HURST SAID, "I FELT IT WAS THE EASIEST THING TO DO" TO PLACE RUCHKIN ON PROBATION.

8. "HURST SAID RUCHKIN'S ATTORNEY AGREED IN THE JUDGE'S CHAMBERS TO PROBATION UNTIL JULY 28 WHEN HE IS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR AGAIN IN FALLS CHURCH GENERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR DISPOSITION OF HIS CASE.

9. "IF THERE'S NO FURTHER PROBLEMS, I GUESS I'LL DISMISS IT, I DON'T KNOW YET", HURST SAID.

10. "RUCHKIN REFUSED TO COMMENT ON HIS CASE.

11. "DRIVERS CHARGED FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH DRUNKEN DRIV-
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PAGE 03 STATE 020353

ING USUALLY PLEAD GUILTY, THEN ARE PLACED ON PROBATION AND MUST ATTEND AN ALCOHOL SAFETY PROGRAM.WITH THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM, CHARGES MAY BE REDUCED TO RECKLESS DRIVING.

12. "RUCHKIN WAS NOT REQUIRED TO MAKE A PLEA AND HE DID NOT, HURST SAID.

13. "I DON'T THINK THE RUSSIANS WANTED HIM TO GO TO THE (ALCOHOL SAFETY) PROGRAM", HURST SAID. "THE RUSSIANS ARE NOT TOO HAPPY ABOUT THE WHOLE THING".

14. "WHEN ASKED IF HE THOUGHT HIS DECISION WAS FAIR TO AMERICAN DRIVERS WHO MUST ATTEND THE PROGRAM OR FACE OTHER PENALTIES, HURST SAID, "I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT, TOO. MAYBE IT ISN'T FAIR, BUT YOU CAN'T BE SUPERFAIR IN A POSITION LIKE THIS.'

15. "I THOUGHT ABOUT IT A LONG TIME", HURST CONTINUED.

"IF I CONVICTED HIM, THEY'D (SOVIETS) PROBABLY HAVE HIM
(RUCHKIN) SELLING TICKETS IN KIEV ON THE MIDNIGHT SHIFT,
I GUESS." UNQUOTE
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